

DSE

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Mexico Air National Guard is very familiar with the program and is providing an invaluable service by supporting the timely delivery of the Raptor. What helps the guard is that funding is provided by Lockheed Martin-Boeing for the DSE test support. "Not the state taxpayer," said Caires.

"From the Air Force days up until 1992, all that test support was free to the customer," said Robinson. Since 1992, due to Air Force budget cuts, customers like the Army and Lockheed have agreed to utilize DSE as a reimbursable service. Now the customer pays for things like flying hour costs and the per diem associated with travel.

"Each pilot averages 2,500 flying hours," said King. "Our DSE guys are some of the most experienced fighter pilots in the Air Force."

"DSE has provided sorties for Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and some foreign military. The only customer we have not flown for is the Coast Guard," said Robinson.

With just six F-16's, DSE is allotted 800 flying hours per year for test support and training.

"While many of our military men and women are deployed overseas," said Caires, "others are being sent around the United States in preparation for future wars. The New Mexico Air National Guard is essential to these kinds of advancing technologies."



Drones, such as this one, are often utilized by the Army to tow targets for actual test firing of missiles, such as the Manpad Stinger missile. Though the Taco DSE F-16's tow the same targets to test its flight characteristics, the actual firing upon the target is only done when being towed by the drone.

Meet Wing's newest recruiter



Staff Sgt Tracie Pope

Staff Sergeant Tracie Pope is the Wing's newest Production Recruiter.

Pope was born in Albuquerque New Mexico and raised in Albuquerque later moving to Belen, New Mexico graduating from Belen High School.

After graduating from high school Pope attended Eastern New Mexico University and the University of New Mexico. In 1982 she joined the New Mexico Air National Guard. Upon completion of basic training she attended Aircraft Electronics school at Chanute Air Force Base, Ill.

Upon completion of technical school in 1982 she served in the New Mexico Air National Guard until January of 1984. After receiving an Honorable Discharge from the New Mexico Air National Guard to be with her spouse, serving in the Air Force at Wiesbaden, Germany, she joined the Montana Air National Guard. Pope attended and graduated Aircraft Engine Technical school in August of 1998. In February of 2000, she was awarded her five level in this same field. She then applied for the vacancy in the recruiting office and was selected to attend technical school in May of 2000. She graduated that same month.

Pope was selected to attend Air National Guard Recruiting School and graduated May 2000. Staff Sergeant Pope hit the ground running upon her return to Great Falls. In a short 18 month period, Staff Sergeant Pope surpassed all veteran recruiters and obtained the coveted 2001 Production Recruiter of the Year Award for Montana.